CHARLOTTE.

A TALE OF TRUTH.

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

She was her parents only joy:
They had but one—one darling child.

ROMEO AND JULIET.

Her form was faultleſs, and her mind,
Untainted yet by art,
Was nobly, juſt, humane, and kind,
And virtue warm'd her heart.
But ah! the cruel ſpoiler came——

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CHARLOTTE.

Chapter XVIII.

REFLECTIONS.

AND am I indeed fallen ſo low," ſaid Charlotte, " as to be only pitied? Will the voice of approbation no more meet my ear? and ſhall I never again poſſeſs a friend, whoſe face will wear a ſmile of joy whenever I approach? Alas! how thoughtleſs, how dreadfully imprudent have I been! I know not which is moſt painful to endure, the ſneer of contempt, or the glance of compaſſion, which is depicted in the various countenances of my own ſex: they are both equally humiliating. Ah! my dear parents, could you now ſee the child of your affections, the daughter whom you ſo dearly loved, a poor ſolitary being, without ſociety, here wearing out her heavy hours in deep regret and anguiſh of heart, no kind friend of her own ſex to whom ſhe can unboſom her griefs, no beloved mother, no woman of character will appear in my company, and low as your Charlotte is fallen, ſhe cannot aſſociate with infamy."

Theſe were the painful reflections which occupied the mind of Charlotte. Montraville had placed her in a ſmall houſe a few miles from New-York: he gave her one female attendant, and ſupplied her with what money ſhe wanted; but buſineſs and pleaſure ſo entirely occupied his time, that he had little to devote to the woman whom he had brought from all her connections, and robbed of innocence. Sometimes, indeed, he would ſteal out at the cloſe of evening, and paſs a few hours with her; and then ſo much was ſhe attached to him, that all her ſorrows were forgotten while bleſt with his ſociety: ſhe would enjoy a walk by moonlight, or ſit by him in a little arbour at the bottom of the garden, and play on the harp, accompanying it with her plaintive, harmonious voice. But often, very often, did he promiſe to renew his viſits, and, forgetful of his promiſe, leave her to mourn her diſappointment. What painful hours of expectation would ſhe paſs! ſhe would ſit at a window which looked toward a field he uſed to croſs, counting the minutes, and ſtraining her eyes to catch the firſt glimpſe of his perſon, till blinded with tears of diſappointment, ſhe would lean her head on her hands, and give free vent to her ſorrows: then catching at ſome new hope, ſhe would again renew her watchful poſition, till the ſhades of evening enveloped every object in a duſky cloud: ſhe would then renew her complaints, and,

with a heart burſting with diſappointed love and wounded ſenſibility, retire to a bed which remorſe had ſtrewed with thorns, and court in vain that comforter of weary nature (who ſeldom viſits the unhappy) to come and ſteep her ſenſes in oblivion.

Who can form an adequate idea of the ſorrow that preyed upon the mind of Charlotte? The wife, whoſe breaſt glows with affection to her huſband, and who in return meets only indifference, can but faintly conceive her anguiſh. Dreadfully painful is the ſituation of ſuch a woman, but ſhe has many comforts of which our poor Charlotte was deprived. The dateous, faithful wife though treated with indifference, has one ſolid pleaſure within her own boſom, ſhe can reflect that ſhe has not deſerved neglect—that ſhe has ever fulfilled the duties of her ſtation with the ſtricteſt exactneſs; ſhe may hope, by conſtant aſſiduity and unremitted attention, to recall her wanderer, and be doubly happy in his returning affection; ſhe knows he cannot leave her to unite himſelf to another: he cannot caſt her out to poverty and contempt; ſhe looks around her, and ſees the ſmile of friendly welcome, or the tear of affectionate conſolation, on the face of every perſon whom ſhe favours with her eſteem; and from all theſe circumſtances ſhe gathers comfort: but the poor girl by thoughtleſs paſſion led aſtray, who, in parting with her honour, has forfeited the

eſteem of the very man to whom ſhe has ſacrificed every thing dear and valuable in life, feels his indifference in the fruit of her own folly, and laments her want of power to recall his loſt affection: ſhe knows there is no tie but honour, and that, in a man who has been guilty of ſeduction, is but very feeble: he may leave her in a moment to ſhame and want; he may marry and forſake her for ever; and ſhould he, ſhe has no redreſs, no friendly ſoothing companion to pour into her wounded mind the balm of conſolation, no benevolent hand to lead her back to the path of rectitude; ſhe has diſgraced her friends, forfeited the good opinion of the world, and undone herſelf; ſhe feels herſelf a poor ſolitary being in the midſt of ſurrounding multitudes; ſhame bows her to the earth, remorſe tears her diſtracted mind, and guilt, poverty, and diſeaſe cloſe the dreadful ſcene: ſhe ſinks unnoticed to oblivion. The finger of contempt may point out to ſome paſſing daughter of youthful mirth, the humble bed where lies this frail ſiſter of mortality; and will ſhe, in the unbounded gaity of her heart, exult in her own unblemiſhed fame, and triumph over the ſilent aſhes of the dead? Oh no! has ſhe a heart of ſenſibility, ſhe will ſtop, and thus addreſs the unhappy victim of folly—

"Thou had'ſt thy faults, but ſure thy ſufferings have expiated them: thy errors brought thee to an early grave; but thou wert a fellow-

creature—thou haſt been unhappy—then be thoſe errors forgotten."

Then, as ſhe ſtoops to pluck the noxious weed from off the ſod, a tear will fall and conſecrate the ſpot to Charity.

For ever honoured be the ſacred drop of humanity: the angel of mercy ſhall record its ſource, and the ſoul from whence it ſprang ſhall be immortal.

My dear Madam contract not your brow into a frown of diſapprobation. I mean not to extenuate the faults of thoſe unhappy women who fall victims to guilt and folly; but ſurely, when we reflect how many errors we are ourſelves ſubject to, how many ſecret faults lie hid in the receſſes of our hearts, which we ſhould bluſh to have brought into open day (and yet thoſe faults require the lenity and pity of a benevolent judge, or awful would be our proſpect of futurity) I ſay my dear Madam, when we conſider this, we ſurely may pity the faults of others.

Believe me, many an unfortunate female, who has once ſtrayed into the thorny paths of vice, would gladly return to virtue, was any generous friend to endeavour to raiſe and re-aſſure her; but alas! it cannot be, you ſay; the world would deride and ſcoff. Then let me tell you, Madam, 'tis a very unfeeling world, and does not deſerve half the bleſſings which a bountiful Providence ſhowers upon it.

Oh, thou benevolent giver of all good! how ſhall we erring mortals dare to look up to thy mercy in the great day of retribution, if we now uncharitably refuſe to overlook the errors, or alleviate the miſeries, of our fellow-creatures.

Chapter XIX.

A MISTAKE DISCOVERED.

JULIA Franklin was the only child of a man of large property, who, at the age of eighteen, left her independent miſtreſs of an unincumbered income of ſeven hundred a year; ſhe was a girl of a lively diſpoſition, and humane, ſuſceptible heart: ſhe reſided in New-York with an uncle, who loved her too well, and had too high an opinion of her prudence, to ſcrutinize her actions ſo much as would have been neceſſary with many young ladies, who were not bleſt with her diſcretion: ſhe was, at the time Montraville arrived at New-York, the life of ſociety, and the univerſal toaſt. Montraville was introduced to her by the following accident.

One night when he was upon guard, a dreadful fire broke out near Mr. Franklin's houſe, which, in a few hours, reduced that and ſeveral others to aſhes; fortunately no lives were loſt, and, by the aſſiduity of the ſoldiers, much valuable property

was ſaved from the flames. In the midſt of the confuſion an old gentleman came up to Montraville, and, putting a ſmall box into his hands, cried—"Keep it, my good Sir, till I come to you again;" and then ruſhing again into the thickeſt of the croud, Montraville ſaw him no more. He waited till the fire was quite extinguiſhed and the mob diſperſed; but in vain: the old gentleman did not appear to claim his property; and Montraville, fearing to make an enquiry, leſt he ſhould meet with impoſtors who might lay claim, without any legal right, to the box, carried it to his lodgings, and locked it up: he naturally imagined that the perſon who committed it to his care knew him, and would, in a day or two, reclaim it; but ſeveral weeks paſſed on, and no enquiry being made, he began to be uneaſy, and reſolved to examine the contents of the box, and if they were, as he ſuppoſed, valuable, to ſpare no pains to diſcover, and reſtore them to the owner. Upon opening it, he found it contained jewels to a large amount, about two hundred pounds in money, and a miniature picture ſet for a bracelet. On examining the picture, he thought he had ſomewhere ſeen features very like it, but could not recollect where. A few days after, being at a public aſſembly, he ſaw Miſs Franklin, and the likeneſs was too evident to be miſtaken: he enquired among his brother officers if any of them knew her, and found one who was

upon terms of intimacy in the family: "then introduce me to her immediately," said he, "for I am certain I can inform her of something which will give her peculiar pleasure."

He was immediately introduced, found she was the owner of the jewels, and was invited to breakfast the next morning in order to their restoration. This whole evening Montraville was honoured with Julia's hand; the lively sallies of her wit, the elegance of her manner, powerfully charmed him: he forgot Charlotte, and indulged himself in saying every thing that was polite and tender to Julia. But on retiring, recollection returned. "What am I about?" said he: "though I cannot marry Charlotte, I cannot be villain enough to forsake her, nor must I dare to trifle with the heart of Julia Franklin. I will return this box," said he, "which has been the source of so much uneasiness already, and in the evening pay a visit to my poor melancholy Charlotte, and endeavour to forget this fascinating Julia."

He arose, dressed himself, and taking the picture out, "I will reserve this from the rest," said he, "and by presenting it to her when she thinks it is lost, enhance the value of the obligation." He repared to Mr. Franklin's, and found Julia in the breakfast parlor alone.

"How happy am I, Madam," said he, that being the fortunate instrument of saving these jewels

has been the means of procuring me the acquaintance of ſo amiable a lady. There are the jewels and money all ſafe."

"But where is the picture, Sir?" ſaid Julia.

"Here, Madam. I would not willingly part with it."

"It is the portrait of my mother," ſaid ſhe, taking it from him: "'tis all that remains." She preſſed it to her lips, and a tear trembled in her eyes. Montraville glanced his eye on her grey night gown and black ribbon, and his own feelings prevented a reply.

Julia Franklin was the very reverſe of Charlotte Temple: ſhe was tall, elegantly ſhaped, and poſſeſſed much of the air and manner of a woman of faſhion; her complexion was a clear brown, enlivened with the glow of health, her eyes, full, black, and ſparkling, darted their intelligent glances through long ſilken laſhes; her hair was ſhining brown, and her features regular and ſtriking; there was an air of innocent gaiety that played about her countenance, where good humour ſat triumphant.

"I have been miſtaken," ſaid Montraville. "I imagined I loved Charlotte: but alas! I am now too late convinced my attachment to her was merely the impulſe of the moment. I fear I have not only entailed laſting miſery on that poor girl, but alſo thrown a barrier in the way of my own happineſs,

which it will be impoſſible to ſurmount. I feel I love Julia Franklin with ardour and ſincerity; yet, when in her preſence, I am ſenſible of my own inability to offer a heart worthy her acceptance, and remain ſilent."

Full of theſe painful thoughts, Montraville walk-out to ſee Charlotte: ſhe ſaw him approach, and ran out to meet him: ſhe baniſhed from her countenance the air of diſcontent which ever appeared when he was abſent, and met him with a ſmile of joy.

"I thought you had forgot me, Montraville," ſaid ſhe, "and was very unhappy."

"I ſhall never forget you, Charlotte," he replied, preſſing her hand.

The uncommon gravity of his countenance, and the brevity of his reply, alarmed her.

"You are not well," ſaid ſhe; "your hand is hot; your eyes are heavy; you are very ill."

"I am a villain," ſaid he mentally, as he turned from her to hide his emotions.

"But come," continued ſhe tenderly, "you ſhall go to bed, and I will ſit by, and watch yon; you will be better when you have ſlept."

Montraville was glad to retire, and by pretending ſleep, hid the agitation of his mind from her penetrating eye. Charlotte watched by him till a late hour, and then, lying ſoftly down, by his ſide, ſunk into a profound ſleep, from whence ſhe awoke not till late the next morning.

CHAPTER XX.

Virtue never appears ſo amiable as when reaching forth her hand to raiſe a fallen ſiſter.

Chapter of Accidents.

WHEN Charlotte awoke, ſhe miſſed Montraville; but thinking he might have ariſen early to enjoy the beauties of the morning, ſhe was preparing to follow him, when caſting her eye on the table, ſhe ſaw a note, and opening it haſtily, found theſe words—

"My dear Charlotte muſt not be ſurpriſed, if ſhe does not ſee me again for ſome time: unavoidable buſineſs will prevent me that pleaſure: be aſſured I am quite well this morning; and what your fond imagination magnified into illneſs, was nothing more than fatigue, which a few hours reſt has entirely removed. Make yourſelf happy and be certain of the unalterable friendſhip of

"MONTRAVILLE."

"*Friendſhip!*" ſaid Charlotte emphatically, as ſhe finiſhed the note, "is it come to this at laſt? Alas! poor forſaken Charlotte, thy doom is now but too apparent. Montraville is no longer intereſted in thy happineſs; and ſhame, remorſe, and diſappointed love will henceforth be thy only attendents."

Though theſe were the ideas that involuntarily

ruſhed upon the mind of Charlotte as ſhe peruſed the fatal note, yet after a few hours had elapſed, the ſyren hope again took poſſeſſion of her boſom, and ſhe flattered herſelf ſhe could, on a ſecond peruſal, diſcover an air of tenderneſs in the few lines he had left, which at firſt had eſcaped her notice. "He certainly cannot be ſo baſe as to leave me," ſaid ſhe, "and in ſtiling himſelf my friend does he not promiſe to protect me. I will not torment myſelf with theſe cauſeleſs fears; I will place a confidence in his honour; and ſure he will not be ſo unjuſt as to abuſe it."

Juſt as ſhe had by this manner of reaſoning brought her mind to ſome tolerable degree of compoſure, ſhe was ſurpriſed by a viſit from Belcour. The dejection viſible in Charlotte's countenance, her ſwoln eyes and neglected attire, at once told him ſhe was unhappy: he made no doubt but Montraville had, by his coldneſs, alarmed her ſuſpicions, and was reſolved, if poſſible, to rouſe her to jealouſy, urge her to reproach him, and by that means occaſion a breach between them. "If I can once convince her that ſhe has a rival," ſaid he, "ſhe will liſten to my paſſion if it is only to revenge his ſlights." Belcour knew but little of the female heart; and what he did know was only of thoſe of looſe and diſſolute lives. He had no idea that a woman might fall a victim to imprudence, and yet retain ſo ſtrong a ſenſe of honour,

as to reject with horror and contempt every ſolicitation to a ſecond fault. He never imagined that a gentle, generous female heart, once tenderly attached, when treated with unkindneſs might break, but would never harbour a thought of revenge.

His viſit was not long, but before he went he fixed a ſcorpion in the heart of Charlotte, whoſe venom embittered every future hour of her life.

We will now return for a moment to Colonel Crayton. He had been three months married, and in that little time had diſcovered that the conduct of his lady was not ſo prudent as it ought to have been: but remonſtrance was vain; her temper was violent; and to the Colonel's great misfortune he had conceived a ſincere affection for her: ſhe ſaw her own power, and, with the art of a Circe, made every action appear to him in what light ſhe pleaſed: his acquaintance laughed at his blindneſs, his friends pitied his infatuation, his amiable daughter, Mrs. Beauchamp, in ſecret deplored the loſs of her father's affection, and grieved that he ſhould be ſo entirely ſwayed by an artful, and, ſhe much feared, infamous woman.

Mrs. Beauchamp was mild and engaging; ſhe loved not the hurry and buſtle of a city, and had prevailed on her huſband to take a houſe a few miles from New-York. Chance led her into the ſame neighbourhood with Charlotte; their houſes ſtood

within a ſhort ſpace of each other, and their gardens joined: ſhe had not been long in her new habitation before the figure of Charlotte ſtruck her; ſhe recollected her intereſting features; ſhe ſaw the melancholy ſo conſpicuous in her countenance, and her heart bled at the reflection, that perhaps deprived of honour, friends, all that was valuable in life, ſhe was doomed to linger out a wretched exiſtence in a ſtrange land, and ſink broken-hearted into an untimely grave. "Would to heaven I could ſnatch her from ſo hard a fate," ſaid ſhe; "but the mereileſs world has barred the doors of compaſſion againſt a poor weak girl, who perhaps, had ſhe one kind friend to raiſe and reaſſure her, would gladly return to peace and virtue; nay even the woman who dares to pity, and endeavour to recall a wandering ſiſter incurs the ſneer of contempt and ridicule, for an action in which even angels are ſaid to rejoice."

The longer Mrs. Beauchamp was a witneſs to the ſolitary life Charlotte led, the more ſhe wiſhed to ſpeak to her, and often as ſhe ſaw her cheeks wet with the tears of anguiſh, ſhe would ſay—"Dear ſufferer, how gladly would I pour into your heart the balm of conſolation, where it not for the fear of deriſion."

But an accident ſoon happened which made her reſolve to brave even the ſcoffs of the world, rather than not enjoy the heavenly ſatisfaction of comforting a deſponding fellow-creature.

Mrs. Beauchamp was an early riſer. She was one morning walking in the garden, leaning on her huſband's arm, when the ſound of a harp attracted their notice: they liſtened attentively, and heard a ſoft melodious voice diſtinctly ſing the following ſtanzas:

Thou glorious orb, ſupremely bright,
Juſt riſing from the ſea,
To chear all nature with thy light,
What are thy beams to me?
In vain thy glories bid me riſe,
To hail the new-born day,
Alas! my morning ſacrifice
Is ſtill to weep and pray.
For what are nature's charms combin'd,
To one, whoſe weary breaſt
Can neither peace nor comfort find,
Nor friend whereon to reſt?
Oh! never! never! whilſt I live
Can my heart's anguiſh ceaſe:
Come, friendly death, thy mandate give,
And let me be at peace.

"'Tis poor Charlotte!" ſaid Mrs. Beauchamp, the pellucid drop of humanity ſtealing down her cheek.

Captain Beauchamp was alarmed at her emotion. "What Charlotte?" ſaid he; "do you know her?"

In the accent of a pitying angel did ſhe diſcloſe

to her husband Charlotte's unhappy situation, and the frequent wish she had formed of being serviceable to her. "I fear," continued she, "the poor girl has been basely betrayed; and if I thought you would not blame me, I would pay her a visit, offer her my friendship, and endeavour to restore to her heart that peace she seems to have lost, and so pathetically laments. Who knows, my dear," laying her hand affectionately on his arm, "who knows but she has left some kind, affectionate parents to lament her errors, and would she return, they might with rapture receive the poor penitent, and wash away her faults in tears of joy. Oh! what a glorious reflection would it be for me could I be the happy instrument of restoring her. Her heart may not be depraved, Beauchamp."

"Exalted woman!" cried Beauchamp, embracing her, "how dost thou rise every moment in my esteem. Follow the impulse of thy generous heart, my Emily. Let prudes and fools censure if they dare, and blame a sensibility they never felt: I will exultingly tell them that the heart that is truly virtuous is ever inclined to pity and forgive the errors of its fellow creatures."

A beam of exulting joy played round the animated countenance of Mrs. Beauchamp at these encomiums bestowed on her by a beloved husband, the most delightful sensations pervaded her heart, and, having breakfasted, she prepared to visit Charlotte.

CHAPTER XXI.

Teach me to feel another's woe,
To hide the fault I ſee,
That mercy I to other ſhow,
That mercy ſhow to me. *Pope.*

WHEN Mrs. Beauchamp was dreſſed, ſhe began to feel embarraſſed at the thought of beginning an acquaintance with Charlotte, and was diſtreſſed how to make the firſt viſit. "I cannot go without ſome introduction," ſaid ſhe, "it will look ſo like impertinent curioſity." At length recollecting herſelf, ſhe ſtepped into the garden, and gathering a few fine cucumbers, took them in her hand by way of apology for her viſit.

A glow of conſcious ſhame vermillioned Charlotte's face as Mrs. Beauchamp entered.

"You will pardon me, Madam," ſaid ſhe, "for not having before paid my reſpects to ſo amiable a neighbour; but we Engliſh people always keep up that reſerve which is the characteriſtic of our nation wherever we go. I have taken the liberty to bring you a few cucumbers, for I obſerved you had none in your garden."

Charlotte, though naturally polite and well-bred, was ſo confuſed ſhe could hardly ſpeak. Her kind viſitor endeavoured to relieve her by not noticing her embarraſſment. "I am come, Madam,"

continued ſhe, " to requeſt you will ſpend the day with me. I ſhall be alone; and, as we are both ſtrangers in this country, we may hereafter be extremely happy in each other's friendſhip."

" Your friendſhip, Madam," ſaid Charlotte bluſhing, " is an honour to all who are favoured with it. Little as I have ſeen of this part of the world, I am no ſtranger to Mrs. Beauchamp's goodneſs of heart and known humanity: but my friendſhip——" She pauſed, glanced her eye upon her own viſible ſituation, and, ſpite of her endeavours to ſuppreſs them, burſt into tears.

Mrs. Beauchamp gueſſed the ſource from whence thoſe tears flowed. " You ſeem unhappy, Madam," ſaid ſhe: ſhall I be thought worthy your confidence! will you entruſt me with the cauſe of your ſorrow, and reſt on my aſſurances to exert my utmoſt power to ſerve you." Charlotte returned a look of gratitude, but could not ſpeak, and Mrs. Beauchamp continued—" My heart was intereſted in your behalf the firſt moment I ſaw you, and I only lament I had not made earlier overtures towards an acquaintance; but I flatter myſelf you will henceforth conſider me as your friend."

" Oh Madam!" cried Charlotte, " I have forfeited the good opinion of all my friends; I have forſaken them, and undone myſelf."

" Come, come, my dear," ſaid Mrs. Beauchamp, " you muſt not indulge theſe gloomy

thoughts: you are not I hope ſo miſerable as you imagine yourſelf: endeavour to be compoſed, and let me be favoured with your company at dinner, when, if you can bring yourſelf to think me your friend, and repoſe a confidence in me, I am ready to convince you it ſhall not be abuſed." She then aroſe and bade her good morning.

At the dining hour Charlotte repaired to Mrs. Beauchamp's, and during dinner aſſumed as compoſed an aſpect as poſſible; but when the cloth was removed, ſhe ſummoned all her reſolution and determined to make Mrs. Beauchamp acquainted with every circumſtance preceding her unfortunate elopement, and the earneſt deſire ſhe had to quit a way of life ſo repugnant to her feelings.

With the benignant aſpect of an angel of mercy did Mrs. Beauchamp liſten to the artleſs tale: ſhe was ſhocked to the ſoul to find how large a ſhare La Rue had in the ſeduction of this amiable girl, and a tear fell, when ſhe reflected ſo vile a woman was now the wife of her father. When Charlotte had finiſhed, ſhe gave her a little time to collect her ſcattered ſpirits, and then aſked her if ſhe had never written to her friends.

"Oh yes, Madam," ſaid ſhe, "frequently: but I have broke their hearts; they are either dead or have caſt me off for ever, for I have never received a ſingle line from them."

"I rather ſuſpect," ſaid Mrs. Beauchamp, "they have never had your letters: but ſuppoſe you were to hear from them, and they were willing to receive you, would you then leave this cruel Montraville, and return to them?"

"Would I!" ſaid Charlotte, claſping her hands; "would not the poor ſailor, toſt on a tempeſtuous ocean, threatened every moment with death, gladly return to the ſhore he had left to truſt to its deceitful calmneſs; Oh, my dear Madam, I would return, though to do it I were obliged to walk barefooted over a burning deſart, and beg a ſcanty pittance of each traveller to ſupport my exiſtence. I would endure it all cheerfully, could I but once more ſee my dear bleſſed mother, hear her pronounce my pardon, and bleſs me before I died; but alas! I ſhall never ſee her more; ſhe has blotted the ungrateful Charlotte from her remembrance, and I ſhall ſink to the grave loaded with her's and my father's curſe."

Mrs. Beauchamp endeavoured to ſooth her. "You ſhall write to them again," ſaid ſhe, "and I will ſee that the letter is ſent by the firſt packet that ſails for England; in the mean time keep up your ſpirits, and hope every thing, by daring to deſerve it.

She then turned the converſation, and Charlotte having taken a cup of tea, wiſhed her benevolent friend a good evening.

CHAPTER XXII.

SORROWS OF THE HEART.

WHEN Charlotte got home ſhe endeavoured to collect her thoughts, and took up a pen in order to addreſs thoſe dear parents, whom, ſpite of her errors, ſhe ſtill loved with the utmoſt tenderneſs, but vain was every effort to write with the leaſt coherence; her tears fell ſo faſt they almoſt blinded her: and as ſhe proceeded to deſcribe her unhappy ſituation, ſhe became ſo agitated that ſhe was obliged to give over the attempt and retire to bed, where, overcome with the fatigue her mind had undergone, ſhe fell into a ſlumber which greatly refreſhed her, and ſhe aroſe in the morning with ſpirits more adequate to the painful taſk ſhe had to perform, and, after ſeveral attempts, at length concluded the following letter to her mother—

TO MRS. TEMPLE.

New-York.

"Will my once kind, my ever beloved mother, deign to receive a letter from her guilty, but repentant child? or has ſhe, juſtly incenſed at my ingratitude, driven the unhappy Charlotte from her remembrance? Alas! thou much injured mother! ſhouldſt thou even diſown me, I dare not complain, becauſe I know I have deſerved it: but yet, believe me, guilty as I am, and cruelly as I have diſap-

pointed the hopes of the fondeſt parents, that ever girl had, even in the moment when, forgetful of my duty, I fled from you and happineſs, even then I loved you moſt, and my heart bled at the thought of what you would ſuffer. Oh! never, never! whilſt I have exiſtence, will the agony of that moment be eraſed from my memory. It ſeemed like the ſeparation of ſoul and body. What can I plead in excuſe for my conduct? alas! nothing! That I loved my ſeducer is but too true! yet powerful as that paſſion is when operating in a young heart glowing with ſenſibility, it never would have conquered my affection to you, my beloved parents, had I not been encouraged, nay, urged to take the fatally imprudent ſtep, by one of my own ſex, who, under the maſk of friendſhip, drew me on to ruin. Yet think not your Charlotte was ſo loſt as to voluntarily ruſh into a life of infamy; no, my dear mother, deceived by the ſpecious appearance of my betrayer, and every ſuſpicion lulled aſleep by the moſt ſolemn promiſes of marriage, I thought not thoſe promiſes would ſo eaſily be forgotten. I never once reflected that the man who could ſtoop to ſeduction, would not heſitate to forſake the wretched object of his paſſion, whenever his capricious heart grew weary of her tenderneſs. When we arrived at this place, I vainly expected him to fulfil his engagements, but was at laſt fatally convinced he had never in-

tended to make me his wife, or if he had once thought of it, his mind was now altered. I ſcorned to claim from his humanity what I could not obtain from his love: I was conſcious of having forfeited the only gem that could render me reſpectable in the eye of the world. I locked my ſorrows in my own boſom, and bore my injuries in ſilence. But how ſhall I proceed? This man, this cruel Montraville, for whom I ſacrificed honour, happineſs, and the love of my friends, no longer looks on me with affection, but ſcorns the credulous girl whom his art has made miſerable. Could you ſee me, my dear parents, without ſociety, without friends, ſtung with remorſe, and (I feel the burning bluſh of ſhame die my cheeks while I write it) tortured with the pangs of diſappointed love; cut to the ſoul by the indifference of him, who, having deprived me of every other comfort, no longer thinks it worth his while to ſooth the heart where he has planted the thorn of never-ceaſing regret. My daily employment is to think of you and weep, to pray for your happineſs and deplore my own folly: my nights are ſcarce more happy, for if by chance I cloſe my weary eyes, and hope ſome ſmall forgetfulneſs of ſorrow, ſome little time to paſs in ſweet oblivion, fancy, ſtill waking, wafts me home to you: I ſee your beloved forms, I kneel and hear the bleſſed words of peace and pardon. Extatic joy pervades my

ſoul; I reach my arms to catch your dear embraces; the motion chaſes the illuſive dream; I wake to real miſery. At other times I ſee my father angry and frowning, point to horrid caves, where, on the cold damp ground, in the agonies of death, I ſee my dear mother and my revered grand-father. I ſtrive to raiſe you; you puſh me from you, and ſhrieking cry—"Charlotte, thou haſt murdered me!" Horror and deſpair tear exery tortured nerve; I ſtart, and leave my reſtleſs bed, weary and unrefreſhed.

"Shocking as theſe reflexions are, I have yet one more dreadful than the reſt. Mother, my dear mother! do not let me quite break your heart when I tell you, in a few months I ſhall bring into the world an innocent witneſs of my guilt. Oh my bleeding heart, I ſhall bring a poor little helpleſs creature, heir to infamy and ſhame.

"This alone has urged me once more to addreſs you, to intereſt you in behalf of this poor unborn, and beg you to extend your protection to the child of your loſt Charlotte: for my own part I have wrote ſo often, ſo frequently have pleaded for forgiveneſs, and entreated to be received once more beneath the paternal roof, that having received no anſwer, not even one line, I much fear you have caſt me from you for ever.

"But ſure you cannot refuſe to protect my innocent infant; it partakes not of its mother's guilt.

Oh my father, oh beloved mother, now do I feel the anguiſh I inflicted on your hearts recoiling with double force upon my own.

"If my child ſhould be a girl (which heaven forbid) tell her the unhappy fate of her mother, and teach her to avoid my errors; if a boy, teach him to lament my miſeries, but tell him not who inflicted them, leſt in wiſhing to revenge his mother's injuries, he ſhould wound the peace of his father.

"And now, dear friends of my ſoul, kind guardians of my infancy, farewell. I feel I never more muſt hope to ſee you; the anguiſh of my heart ſtrikes at the ſtrings of life, and in a ſhort time I ſhall be at reſt. Oh could I but receive your bleſſing and forgiveneſs before I died, it would ſmooth my paſſage to the peaceful grave, and be a bleſſed foretaſte of a happy eternity. I beſeech you, curſe me not, my adored parents, but let a tear of pity and pardon fall to the memory of your loſt CHARLOTTE."

CHAPTER XXIII.

A MAN MAY SMILE, AND SMILE, AND BE A VILLAIN.

WHILE Charlotte was enjoying ſome ſmall degree of comfort in the conſoling friend-

ſhip of Mrs. Beauchamp, Montraville was advancing rapidly in his affection towards Miſs Franklin. Julia was an amiable girl; ſhe ſaw only the fair ſide of his character; ſhe poſſeſſed an independant fortune, and reſolved to be happy with the man of her heart, though his rank and fortune were by no means ſo exalted as ſhe had a right to expect; ſhe ſaw the paſſion which Montraville ſtruggled to conceal; ſhe wondered at his timidity, but imagined the diſtance fortune had placed between them occaſioned his backwardneſs, and made every advance which ſtrict prudence and a becoming modeſty would permit. Montraville ſaw with pleaſure he was not indifferent to her, but a ſpark of honour which animated his boſom would not ſuffer him to take advantage of her partiality. He was well acquainted with Charlotte's ſituation, and he thought there would be a double cruelty in forſaking her at ſuch a time: and to marry Miſs Franklin, while honour, humanity, every ſacred law, obliged him ſtill to protect and ſupport Charlotte, was a baſeneſs which his ſoul ſhuddered at.

He communicated his uneaſineſs to Belcour: it was the very thing this pretended friend had wiſhed. "And do you really," ſaid he, laughing, "heſitate at marrying the lovely Julia, and becoming maſter of her fortune, becauſe a little fooliſh, fond girl choſe to leave her friends, and run away with you to America. Dear Montra-

ville, act more like a man of ſenſe; this whining, pining Charlotte, who occaſions you ſo much uneaſineſs, would have eloped with ſomebody elſe if ſhe had not with you."

"Would to heaven," ſaid Montraville, "I had never ſeen her; my regard for her was but the momentary paſſion of deſire, but I feel I ſhall love and revere Julia Franklin as long as I live; yet to leave poor Charlotte in her preſent ſituation would be cruel beyond deſcription."

"Oh my good ſentimental friend," ſaid Belcour, "do you imagine no body has a right to provide for the brat but yourſelf."

Montraville ſtarted. "Sure," ſaid he, "you cannot mean to inſinuate that Charlotte is falſe."

"I don't inſinuate it," ſaid Belcour, "I know it."

Montraville turned pale as aſhes. "Then there is no faith in woman," ſaid he.

"While I thought you attached to her," ſaid Belcour with an air of indifference, "I never wiſhed to make you uneaſy by mentioning her perfidy, but as I know you love and are beloved by Miſs Franklin, I was determined not to let theſe fooliſh ſcruples of honour ſtep between you and happineſs, or your tenderneſs for the peace of a perfidious girl prevent your uniting yourſelf to a woman of honour."

"Good heavens!" ſaid Montraville, "what

poignant reflections does a man endure who ſees a lovely woman plunged in infamy, and is conſcious he was her firſt ſeducer; but are you certain of what you ſay, Belcour?"

"So far," replied he, "that I myſelf have received advances from her which I would not take advantage of out of regard to you: but hang it, think no more about her. I dined at Franklin's today, and Julia bid me ſeek and bring you to tea: ſo come along, my lad, make good uſe of opportunity, and ſeize the gifts of fortune while they are within your reach."

Montraville was too much agitated to paſs a happy evening even in the company of Julia Franklin: he determined to viſit Charlotte early the next morning, tax her with her falſehood, and take an everlaſting leave of her; but when the morning came, he was commanded on duty, and for ſix weeks was prevented from putting his deſign in execution. At length he found an hour to ſpare, and walked out to ſpend it with Charlotte: it was near four o'clock in the afternoon when he arrived at her cottage: ſhe was not in the parlour, and without calling the ſervant he walked up ſtairs, thinking to find her in her bed room. He opened the door, and the firſt object that met his eyes was Charlotte aſleep on the bed, and Belcour by her ſide.

"Death and diſtraction," ſaid he, ſtamping, "this is too much. Riſe, villain, and defend your-

ſelf." Belcour ſprang from the bed. The noiſe awoke Charlotte: terrified at the furious appearance of Montraville, and ſeeing Belcour with him in the chamber, ſhe caught hold of his arm as he ſtood by the bed ſide, and eagerly aſked what was the matter.

"Treacherous infamous girl," ſaid he, "can you aſk? How came he here?" pointing to Belcour.

"As heaven is my witneſs," replied ſhe weeping, "I do not know. I have not ſeen him for theſe three weeks."

"Then you confeſs he ſometimes viſits you?"

"He came ſometimes by your deſire."

"'Tis falſe; I never deſired him to come, and you know I did not: but mark me, Charlotte, from this inſtant our connexion is at an end. Let Belcour, or any other of your favoured lovers, take you and provide for you: I have done with you for ever."

He was then going to leave her: but ſtarting wildly from the bed, ſhe threw herſelf on her knees before him, proteſting her innocence and entreating him not to leave her. "Oh Montraville," ſaid ſhe, "kill me, for pity's ſake kill me, but do not doubt my fidelity. Do not leave me in this horrid ſituation; for the ſake of your unborn child, oh! ſpurn not the wretched mother from you."

"Charlotte," ſaid he, with a firm voice, "I

ſhall take care that neither you nor your child want any thing in the approaching painful hour; but we meet no more." He then endeavoured to raiſe her from the ground: but in vain: ſhe clung about his knees, entreating him to believe her innocent, and conjuring Belcour to clear up the dreadful myſtery.

Belcour caſt on Montraville a ſmile of contempt: it irritated him almoſt to madneſs; he broke from the feeble arms of the diſtreſſed girl; ſhe ſhrieked and fell proſtrate on the floor.

Montraville inſtantly left the houſe and returned haſtily to the city.

CHAPTER XXIV.

MYSTERY DEVELOPED.

UNFORTUNATELY for Charlotte, about three weeks before this unhappy rencontre, Captain Beauchamp, being ordered to Rhode-Iſland, his lady had accompanied him, ſo that Charlotte was deprived of her friendly advice and conſoling ſociety. The afternoon on which Montraville had viſited her ſhe had found herſelf languid and fatigued, and after making a very ſlight dinner had lain down to endeavour to recruit her exhauſted ſpirits, and, contrary to her expectations, had fallen aſleep. She had not long been

lain down, when Belcour arrived, for he took every opportunity of viſiting her, and ſtriving to awaken her reſentment againſt Montraville. He enquired of the ſervant where her miſtreſs was, and being told ſhe was aſleep, took up a book to amuſe himſelf: having ſat a few minutes, he by chance caſt his eyes towards the road, and ſaw Montraville approaching; he inſtantly conceived the diabolical ſcheme of ruining the unhappy Charlotte in his opinion for ever; he therefore ſtole ſoftly up ſtairs, and laying himſelf by her ſide with the greateſt precaution, for fear ſhe ſhould awake, was in that ſituation diſcovered by his credulous friend.

When Montraville ſpurned the weeping Charlotte from him, and left her almoſt diſtracted with terror and deſpair, Belcour raiſed her from the floor, and leading her down ſtairs, aſſumed the part of a tender, conſoling friend; ſhe liſtened to the arguments he advanced with apparent compoſure; but this was only the calm of a moment: the remembrance of Montraville's recent cruelty again ruſhed upon her mind: ſhe puſhed him from her with ſome violence, and crying—"Leave me, Sir, I beſeech you leave me, for much I fear you have been the cauſe of my fidelity being ſuſpected; go, leave me to the accumulated miſeries my own imprudence has brought upon me."

She then left him with precipitation, and retiring to her own apartment, threw herſelf on the

bed, and gave vent to an agony of grief, which it is impoſſible to deſcribe.

It now occurred to Belcour that ſhe might poſſibly write to Montraville, and endeavour to convince him of her innocence: he was well aware of her pathetic remonſtrances, and, ſenſible of the tenderneſs of Montraville's heart, reſolved to prevent any letters ever reaching him: he therefore called the ſervant, and, by the powerful perſuaſion of a bribe, prevailed with her to promiſe whatever letters her miſtreſs might write ſhould be ſent to him. He then left a polite, tender note for Charlotte, and returned to New-York. His firſt buſineſs was to ſeek Montraville, and endeavour to convince him that what had happened would ultimately tend to his happineſs: he found him in his apartment, ſolitary, penſive, and wrapped in diſagreeable reflexions.

"Why how now, whining, pining lover?" ſaid he, clapping him on the ſhoulder. Montraville ſtarted; a momentary flush of reſentment croſſed his cheek, but inſtantly gave place to a deathlike paleneſs, occaſioned by painful remembrance —remembrance awakened by that monitor, whom, though we may in vain endeavour, we can never entirely ſilence.

"Belcour," ſaid he, "you have injured me in a tender point."

"Prithee, Jack," replied Belcour, "do not

make a ſerious matter of it: how could I refuſe the girl's advances? and thank heaven ſhe is not your wife."

"True," ſaid Montraville; "but ſhe was innocent when I firſt knew her. It was I ſeduced her, Belcour. Had it not been for me, ſhe had ſtill been virtuous and happy in the affection and protection of her family."

"Pſhaw," replied Belcour, laughing, "if you had not taken advantage of her eaſy nature, ſome other would, and where is the difference, pray?"

"I wiſh I had never ſeen her," cried he paſſionately, and ſtarting from his ſeat. "Oh that curſed French woman," added he with vehemence, "had it not been for her, I might have been happy ——" He pauſed.

"With Julia Franklin," ſaid Belcour. The name, like a ſudden ſpark of electric fire, ſeemed for a moment to ſuſpend his faculties—for a moment he was transfixed; but recovering, he caught Belcour's hand, and cried—"Stop! ſtop! I beſeech you, name not the lovely Julia and the wretched Montraville in the ſame breath. I am a ſeducer, a mean, ungenerous ſeducer of unſuſpecting innocence. I dare not hope that purity like her's would ſtoop to unite itſelf with black, premeditated guilt: yet by heavens I ſwear, Belcour, I thought I loved the loſt, abandoned Charlotte till I ſaw Julia—I thought I never could ſor-

ſake her; but the heart is deceitful, and I now can plainly diſcriminate between the impulſe of a youthful paſſion, and the pure flame of diſintereſted affection."

At that inſtant Julia Franklin paſſed the window, leaning on her uncle's arm. She curtſied as ſhe paſſed, and, with the bewitching ſmile of modeſt chearfulneſs, cried—"Do you bury yourſelves in the houſe this fine evening, gents?" There was ſomething in the voice! the manner! the look! that was altogether irreſiſtible. "Perhaps ſhe wiſhes my company," ſaid Montraville mentally, as he ſnatched up his hat: "if I thought ſhe loved me, I would confeſs my errors, and truſt to her generoſity to pity and pardon me." He ſoon overtook her, and offering her his arm, they ſauntered to pleaſant but unfrequented walks. Belcour drew Mr. Franklin on one ſide and entered into a political diſcourſe: they walked faſter than the young people, and Belcour by ſome means contrived entirely to loſe ſight of them. It was a fine evening in the beginning of autumn; the laſt remains of day-light faintly ſtreaked the weſtern ſky, while the moon, with pale and virgin luſtre, in the room of gorgeous gold and purple, ornamented the canopy of heaven with ſilver, fleecy clouds, which now and then half hid her lovely face, and, by partly concealing, heightened every beauty; the zephyrs

whiſpered ſoftly through the trees, which now began to ſhed their leafy honours; a ſolemn ſilence reigned: and to a happy mind an evening ſuch as this would give ſerenity, and calm, unruffled pleaſure; but to Montraville, while it ſoothed the turbulence of his paſſions, it brought increaſe of melancholy reflections. Julia was leaning on his arm: he took her hand in his, and preſſing it tenderly, ſighed deeply, but continued ſilent. Julia was embarraſſed; ſhe wiſhed to break a ſilence ſo unaccountable, but was unable; ſhe loved Montraville, ſhe ſaw he was unhappy, and wiſhed to know the cauſe of his uneaſineſs, but that innate modeſty which nature has implanted in the female breaſt, prevented her enquiring. "I am bad company, Miſs Franklin," ſaid he, at laſt recollecting himſelf; but I have met with ſomething to-day that has greatly diſtreſſed me, and I cannot ſhake off the diſagreeable impreſſion it has made on my mind."

"I am ſorry," ſhe replied, "that you have any cauſe of inquietude. I am ſure if you were as happy as you deſerve, and as all your friends wiſh you—" She heſitated. "And might I," replied he with ſome animation, "preſume to rank the amiable Julia in that number?"

"Certainly," ſaid ſhe, "the ſervice you have rendered me, the knowledge of your worth, all combine to make me eſteem you."

"Eſteem, my lovely Julia," ſaid he paſſionately, "is but a poor cold word. I would if I dared, if I thought I merited your attention—but no, I muſt not—honour forbids. I am beneath your notice, Julia, I am miſerable and cannot hope to be otherwiſe."

"Alas!" ſaid Julia, "I pity you."

"Oh thou condeſcending charmer," ſaid he, "how that ſweet word chears my ſad heart. Indeed if you knew all, you would pity; but at the ſame time I fear you would deſpiſe me."

Juſt then they were again joined by Mr. Franklin and Belcour. It had interrupted an intereſting diſcourſe. They found it impoſſible to converſe on indifferent ſubjects, and proceeded home in ſilence. At Mr. Franklin's door Montraville again preſſed Julia's hand, and faintly articulating "good night," retired to his lodgings diſpirited and wretched, from a conſciouſneſs that he deſerved not the affection, with which he plainly ſaw he was honoured.

Chapter XXV.

RECEPTION OF A LETTER.

"AND where now is our poor Charlotte?" ſaid Mr. Temple one evening, as the cold blaſts of autumn whiſtled rudely over the heath, and the yellow appearance of the diſtant wood,

ſpoke the near approach of winter. In vain the chearful fire blazed on the hearth, in vain was he ſurrounded by all the comforts of life; the parent was ſtill alive in his heart, and when he thought that perhaps his once darling child was ere this expoſed to all the miſeries of want in a diſtant land, without a friend to ſooth and comfort her, without the benignant look of compaſſion to chear, or the angelic voice of pity to pour the balm of conſolation on her wounded heart; when he thought of this, his whole ſoul diſſolved in tenderneſs; and while he wiped the tear of anguiſh from the eye of his patient, uncomplaining Lucy, he ſtruggled to ſuppreſs the ſympathizing drop that ſtarted in his own. "Oh, my poor girl," ſaid Mrs. Temple, "how muſt ſhe be altered, elſe ſurely ſhe would have relieved our agonizing minds by one line to ſay ſhe lived—to ſay ſhe had not quite forgot the parents who almoſt idolized her."

"Gracious heaven," ſaid Mr. Temple, ſtarting from his ſeat, "who would wiſh to be a father, to experience the agonizing pangs inflicted on a parent's heart by the ingratitude of a child?" Mrs. Temple wept; her father took her hand; he would have ſaid, "be comforted my child," but the words died on his tongue. The ſad ſilence that enſued was interrupted by a loud rap at the door. In a moment a ſervant entered with a letter in his hand.

Mrs. Temple took it from him: ſhe caſt her eyes upon the ſuperſcription; ſhe knew the writing. "'Tis Charlotte," ſaid ſhe, eagerly breaking the ſeal, "ſhe has not quite forgot us." But before ſhe had half gone through the contents, a ſudden ſickneſs ſeized her; ſhe grew cold and giddy, and putting it into her huſband's hand, ſhe cried—"Read it: I cannot." Mr. Temple attempted to read it aloud, but frequently pauſed to give vent to his tears. "My poor deluded child," ſaid he, when he had finiſhed.

"Oh, ſhall we not forgive the dear penitent?" ſaid Mrs. Temple. "We muſt, we will my love; ſhe is willing to return, and 'tis our duty to receive her."

"Father of mercy," ſaid Mr. Eldridge, raiſing his claſped hands, "let me but live once more to ſee the dear wanderer reſtored to her afflicted parents, and take me from this world of ſorrow whenever it ſeemeth beſt to thy wiſdom."

"Yes, we will receive her," ſaid Mr. Temple; "we will endeavour to heal her wounded ſpirit, and ſpeak peace and comfort to her agitated ſoul. I will write to her to return immediately."

"Oh!" ſaid Mrs. Temple, "I would if poſſible fly to her, ſupport and chear the dear ſufferer in the approaching hour of diſtreſs, and tell her how nearly penitence is allied to virtue. Cannot we go and conduct her home, my love?" con-

tinued ſhe, laying her hand on his arm. "My father will ſurely forgive our abſence if we go to bring home his darling."

"You cannot go, my Lucy," ſaid Mr. Temple: "the delicacy of your frame would but poorly ſuſtain the fatigue of a long voyage; but I will go and bring the gentle penitent to your arms; we may ſtill ſee many years of happineſs."

The ſtruggle in the boſom of Mrs. Temple between maternal and conjugal tenderneſs was long and painful. At length the former triumphed, and ſhe conſented that her huſband ſhould ſet forwad to New-York by the firſt opportunity: ſhe wrote to her Charlotte in the tendereſt, moſt conſoling manner, and looked forward to the happy hour, when ſhe ſhould again embrace her, with the moſt animated hope.

CHAPTER XXVI.

WHAT MIGHT BE EXPECTED.

IN the mean time the paſſion Montraville had conceived for Julia Franklin daily increaſed, and he ſaw evidently how much he was beloved by that amiable girl: he was likewiſe ſtrongly prepoſſeſſed with an idea of Charlotte's perfidy. What wonder then if he gave himſelf up to the delightful ſenſation which pervaded his boſom; and finding no obſtacle

ariſe to oppoſe his happineſs, he ſolicited and obtained the hand of Julia. A few days before his marriage he thus addreſſed Belcour:

"Though Charlotte, by her abandoned conduct, has thrown herſelf from my protection, I ſtill hold myſelf bound to ſupport her till relieved from her preſent condition, and alſo to provide for the child. I do not intend to ſee her again, but I will place a ſum of money in your hands, which will amply ſupply her with every convenience; but ſhould ſhe require more, let her have it, and I will ſee it repaid. I wiſh I could prevail on the poor deluded girl to return to her friends: ſhe was an only child, and I make no doubt but that they would joyfully receive her; it would ſhock me greatly to ſee her henceforth leading a life of infamy, as I ſhould always accuſe myſelf of being the primary cauſe of all her errors. If ſhe ſhould chuſe to remain under your protection, be kind to her, Belcour, I conjure you. Let not ſatiety prompt you to treat her in ſuch a manner, as may drive her to actions which neceſſity might urge her to, while her better reaſon diſapproved them: ſhe ſhall never want a friend while I live, but I never more deſire to behold her; her preſence would be always painful to me, and a glance from her eye would call the bluſh of conſcious guilt into my cheek.

"I will write a letter to her, which you may

deliver when I am gone, as I ſhall go to St. Euſtatia the day after my union with Julia, who will accompany me."

Belcour promiſed to fulfil the requeſt of his friend, though nothing was farther from his intentions, than the leaſt deſign of delivering the letter, or making Charlotte acquainted with the proviſion Montraville had made for her; he was bent on the complete ruin of the unhappy girl, and ſuppoſed, by reducing her to an entire dependance on him, to bring her by degrees to conſent to gratify his ungenerous paſſion.

The evening before the day appointed for the nuptials of Montraville and Julia, the former retired early to his apartment; and ruminating on the paſt ſcenes of his life, ſuffered the keeneſt remorſe in the remembrance of Charlotte's ſeduction. "Poor girl," ſaid he, "I will at leaſt write and bid her adieu; I will too endeavour to awaken that love of virtue in her boſom which her unfortunate attachment to me has extinguiſhed." He took up the pen and began to write, but words were denied him. How could he addreſs the woman whom he had ſeduced, and whom, though he thought unworthy his tenderneſs, he was about to bid adieu for ever? How ſhould he tell her that he was going to abjure her, to enter into the moſt indiſſoluble ties with another, and that he could not even own the infant which ſhe bore as his child? Several letters

were begun and deſtroyed: at length he completed the following:

To Charlotte.

"Though I have taken up my pen to addreſs you, my poor injured girl, I feel I am inadequate to the taſk; yet, however painful the endeavour, I could not reſolve upon leaving you for ever without one kind line to bid you adieu, to tell you how my heart bleeds at the remembrance of what you was, before you ſaw the hated Montraville. Even now imagination paints the ſcene, when, torn by contending paſſions, when, ſtruggling between love and duty, you fainted in my arms, and I lifted you into the chaiſe: I ſee the agony of your mind, when, recovering, you found yourſelf on the road to Portſmouth: but how, my gentle girl, how could you, when ſo juſtly impreſſed with the value of virtue, how could you, when loving as I thought you loved me, yield to the ſolicitations of Belcour?

"Oh Charlotte, conſcience tells me it was I, villain that I am, who firſt taught you the allurements of guilty pleaſure; it was I who dragged you from the calm repoſe which innocence and virtue ever enjoy; and can I, dare I tell you, it was not love prompted to the horrid deed? No, thou dear, fallen angel, believe your repentant Montraville, when he tells you the man who truly loves will never betray the object of his affection. Adieu, Charlotte: could you ſtill find charms in a life of

unoffending innocence, return to your parents; you ſhall never want the means of ſupport both for yourſelf and child. Oh! gracious heaven! may that child be entirely free from the vices of its father and the weakneſs of its mother.

"To-morrow—— but no, I cannot tell you what to-morrow will produce; Belcour will inform you: he alſo has caſh for you, which I beg you will aſk for whenever you may want it. Once more adieu: believe me, could I hear you was returned to your friends, and enjoying that tranquillity of which I have robbed you, I ſhould be as completely happy as even you, in your fondeſt hours, could wiſh me, but till then a gloom will obſcure the brighteſt proſpects of

MONTRAVILLE."

After he had ſealed this letter he threw himſelf on the bed, and enjoyed a few hours repoſe. Early in the morning Belcour tapped at his door: he aroſe haſtily, and prepared to meet his Julia at the altar.

"This is the letter to Charlotte," ſaid he, giving it to Belcour: "take it to her when we are gone to Euſtatia; and I conjure you, my dear friend, not to uſe any ſophiſtical arguments to prevent her return to virtue; but ſhould ſhe incline that way, encourage her in the thought, and aſſiſt her to put her deſign in execution.

Chapter XXVII.

Penſive ſhe mourn'd, and hung her languid head,
Like a fair lily overcharg'd with dew.

CHARLOTTE had now been left almoſt three months a prey to her own melancholy reflexions—ſad companions indeed; nor did any one break in upon her ſolitude but Belcour, who once or twice called to enquire after her health, and tell her he had in vain endeavoured to bring Montraville to hear reaſon; and once, but only once, was her mind cheared by the receipt of an affectionate letter from Mrs. Beauchamp. Often had ſhe wrote to her perfidious ſeducer, and with the moſt perſuaſive eloquence endeavoured to convince him of her innocence; but theſe letters were never ſuffered to reach the hands of Montraville, or they muſt, though on the very eve of marriage, have prevented his deſerting the wretched girl. Real anguiſh of heart had in a great meaſure faded her charms, her cheeks were pale from want of reſt, and her eyes, by frequent, indeed almoſt continued weeping, were ſunk and heavy. Sometimes a gleam of hope would play about her heart when ſhe thought of her parents—"They cannot ſurely," ſhe would ſay, "refuſe to forgive me; or ſhould they deny their pardon to me, they will not hate my innocent infant on account of its mother's errors."

How often did the poor mourner wish for the conſoling preſence of the benevolent Mrs. Beauchamp. "If ſhe were here," ſhe would cry, "ſhe would certainly comfort me, and ſooth the diſtraction of my ſoul."

She was ſitting one afternoon, wrapped in theſe melancholy reflexions, when ſhe was interrupted by the entrance of Belcour. Great as the alteration was which inceſſant ſorrow had made on her perſon ſhe was ſtill intereſting, ſtill charming; and the unhallowed flame, which had urged Belcour to plant diſſenſion between her and Montraville, ſtill raged in his boſom: he was determined if poſſible, to make her his miſtreſs; nay, he had even conceived the diabolical ſcheme of taking her to New-York, and making her appear in every public place where it was likely ſhe ſhould meet Montraville, that he might be a witneſs to his unmanly triumph.

When he entered the room where Charlotte was ſitting, he aſſumed the look of tender, conſolatory friendſhip. "And how does my lovely Charlotte?" ſaid he, taking her hand: "I fear you are not ſo well as I could wiſh."

"I am not well, Mr. Belcour," ſaid ſhe, "very far from it; but the pains and infirmities of the body I could eaſily bear, nay, ſubmit to them with patience, were they not aggravated by the moſt inſupportable anguiſh of my mind."

"You are not happy, Charlotte," ſaid he, with a look of well-diſſembled ſorrow.

"Alas!" replied ſhe mournfully, ſhaking her head, "how can I be happy, deſerted and forſaken as I am, without a friend of my own ſex to whom I can unburthen my full heart, nay, my fidelity ſuſpected by the very man for whom I have ſacrificed every thing valuable in life, for whom I have made myſelf a poor deſpiſed creature, an outcaſt from ſociety, an object only of contempt and pity."

"You think too meanly of yourſelf, Miſs Temple: there is no one who would dare to treat you with contempt: all who have the pleaſure of knowing you muſt admire and eſteem. You are lonely here, my dear girl; give me leave to conduct you to New-York, where the agreeable ſociety of ſome ladies, to whom I will introduce you, will diſpel theſe ſad thoughts, and I ſhall again ſee returning chearfulneſs animate thoſe lovely features."

"Oh never! never!" cried Charlotte emphatically: "the virtuous part of my ſex will ſcorn me, and I will never aſſociate with infamy. No, Belcour, here let me hide my ſhame and ſorrow, here let me ſpend my few remaining days in obſcurity, unknown and unpitied, here let me die unlamented, and my name ſink to oblivion." Here her tears ſtopped her utterance.

Belcour was awed to ſilence: he dared not interrupt her; and after a moment's pauſe ſhe proceeded—"I once had conceived the thought of going to New-York to ſeek out the ſtill dear, though cruel, ungenerous Montraville, to throw myſelf at his feet, and entreat his compaſſion; heaven knows, not for myſelf; if I am no longer beloved, I will not be indebted to his pity to redreſs my injuries, but I would have knelt and entreated him not to forſake my poor unborn—" She could ſay no more; a crimſon glow ruſhed over her cheeks, and covering her face with her hands, ſhe ſobbed aloud.

Something like humanity was awakened in Belcour's breaſt by this pathetic ſpeech: he aroſe and walked towards the window; but the ſelfiſh paſſion which had taken poſſeſſion of his heart ſoon ſtifled theſe finer emotions; and he thought if Charlotte was once convinced ſhe had no longer any dependance on Montraville, ſhe would more readily throw herſelf on his protection. Determined, therefore, to inform her of all that had happened, he again reſumed his ſeat; and finding ſhe began to be more compoſed, enquired if ſhe had ever heard from Montraville ſince the unfortunate rencontre in her bed chamber.

"Ah no," ſaid ſhe, "I fear I ſhall never hear from him again."

"I am greatly of your opinion," ſaid Belcour, "for he has been for ſome time paſt greatly attached——"

At the word "attached" a death-like paleneſs overſpread the countenance of Charlotte, but ſhe applied to ſome hartſhorn which ſtood beſide her, and Belcour proceeded.

"He has been for ſome time paſt greatly attached to one Miſs Franklin, a pleaſing lively girl, with a large fortune."

"She may be richer, may be handſomer," cried Charlotte, "but cannot love him ſo well. Oh may ſhe beware of his art, and not truſt him too far as I have done."

"He addreſſes her publicly," ſaid he, "and it was rumoured they were to be married before he ſailed for Euſtatia, whither his company is ordered."

"Belcour," ſaid Charlotte, ſeizing his hand, and gazing at him earneſtly, while her pale lips trembled with convulſive agony, "tell me, and tell me truly, I beſeech you, do you think he can be ſuch a villain as to marry another woman, and leave me to die with want and miſery in a ſtrange land: tell me what you think; I can bear it very well; I will not ſhrink from this heavieſt ſtroke of fate; I have deſerved my afflictions, and I will endeavour to bear them as I ought."

"I fear," ſaid Belcour, "he can be that villain."

"Perhaps," cried ſhe, eagerly interrupting him, "perhaps he is married already: come, let me know the worſt," continued ſhe with an affected look of compoſure: "you need not be afraid, I ſhall not ſend the unfortunate lady a bowl of poiſon."

"Well then, my dear girl," ſaid he, deceived by her appearance, "they were married on Thurſday, and yeſterday morning they ſailed for Euſtatia."

"Married—gone—ſay you?" cried ſhe in a diſtracted accent, "what without a laſt farewell, without one thought on my unhappy ſituation! Oh Montraville, may God forgive your perfidy." She ſhrieked, and Belcour ſprang forward juſt in time to prevent her falling to the floor.

Alarming faintings now ſucceeded each other, and ſhe was conveyed to her bed, from whence ſhe earneſtly prayed ſhe might never more ariſe. Belcour ſtaid with her that night, and in the morning found her in a high fever. The fits ſhe had been ſeized with had greatly terrified him; and confined as ſhe now was to a bed of ſickneſs, ſhe was no longer an object of deſire: it is true for ſeveral days he went conſtantly to ſee her, but her pale, emaciated appearance diſguſted him: his viſits became leſs frequent; he forgot the ſolemn charge given him by Montraville; he even forgot the money entruſted to his care; and, the burning bluſh of indig-

nation and ſhame tinges my cheek while I write it, this diſgrace to humanity and manhood at length forgot even the injured Charlotte; and, attracted by the blooming health of a farmer's daughter, whom he had ſeen in his frequent excurſions to the country, he left the unhappy girl to ſink unnoticed to the grave, a prey to ſickneſs, grief and penury; while he, having triumphed over the virtue of the artleſs cottager, rioted in all the intemperance of luxury and lawleſs pleaſure.

Chapter XXVIII.

A TRIFLING RETROSPECT.

"BLESS my heart," cries my young volatile reader, "I ſhall never have patience to get through theſe volumes, there are ſo many ahs! and ohs! ſo much fainting, tears, and diſtreſs, I am ſick to death of the ſubject." My dear, chearful, innocent girl, for innocent I will ſuppoſe you to be, or you would acutely feel the woes of Charlotte, did conſcience ſay, thus might it have been with me, had not Providence interpoſed to ſnatch me from deſtruction: therefore, my lively, innocent girl, I muſt requeſt your patience; I am writing a tale of truth: I mean to write it to the heart: but if perchance the heart is rendered impenetrable by unbounded proſperity, or a continuance in vice,

I expect not my tale to please, nay, I even expect it will be thrown by with disgust. But softly, gentle fair one; I pray you throw it not aside till you have perused the whole; mayhap you may find something therein to repay you for the trouble. Methinks I see a sarcastic smile sit on your countenance.—"And what," cry you, "does the conceited author suppose we can glean from these pages, if Charlotte is held up as an object of terror, to prevent us from falling into guilty errors? does not La Rue triumph in her shame, and by adding art to guilt, obtain the affection of a worthy man, and rise to a station where she is beheld with respect, and chearfully received into all companies. What then is the moral you would inculcate? Would you wish us to think that a deviation from virtue, if covered by art and hypocrisy, is not an object of detestation, but on the contrary shall raise us to fame and honour? while the hapless girl who falls a victim to her too great sensibility, shall be loaded with ignominy and shame?" No, my fair querist, I mean no such thing. Remember the endeavours of the wicked are often suffered to prosper, that in the end their fall may be attended with more bitterness of heart; while the cup of affliction is poured out for wise and salutary ends, and they who are compelled to drain it even to the bitter dregs, often find comfort at the bottom; the tear of penitence blots their offences from the book of fate, and they

riſe from the heavy, painful trial, purified and fit for a manſion in the kingdom of eternity.

Yes, my young friends, the tear of compaſſion ſhall fall for the fate of Charlotte, while the name of La Rue ſhall be deteſted and deſpiſed. For Charlotte, the ſoul melts with ſympathy; for La Rue, it feels nothing but horror and contempt. But perhaps your gay hearts would rather follow the fortunate Mrs. Crayton through the ſcenes of pleaſure and diſſipation in which ſhe was engaged, than liſten to the complaints and miſeries of Charlotte. I will for once oblige you: I will for once follow her to midnight revels, balls, and ſcenes of gaiety, for in ſuch was ſhe conſtantly engaged.

I have ſaid her perſon was lovely; let us add that ſhe was ſurrounded by ſplendor and affluence, and he muſt know but little of the world who can wonder, (however faulty ſuch a woman's conduct,) at her being followed by the men, and her company courted by the women: in ſhort, Mrs. Crayton was the univerſal favourite: ſhe ſet the faſhions, ſhe was toaſted by all the gentlemen, and copied by all the ladies.

Colonel Crayton was a domeſtic man. Could he be happy with ſuch a woman? impoſſible! Remonſtrance was vain: he might as well have preached to the winds, as endeavour to perſuade her from any action, however ridiculous, on which ſhe had ſet her mind: in ſhort, after a little

ineffectual ſtruggle, he gave up the attempt, and left her to follow the bent of her own inclinations: what thoſe were, I think the reader muſt have ſeen enough of her character to form a juſt idea. Among the number who paid their devotions at her ſhrine, ſhe ſingled one, a young Enſign of mean birth, indifferent education, and weak intellects. How ſuch a man came into the army, we hardly know to account for, and how he afterwards roſe to poſts of honour is likewiſe ſtrange and wonderful. But fortune is blind, and ſo are thoſe too frequently who have the power of diſpenſing her favours: elſe why do we ſee fools and knaves at the very top of the wheel, while patient merit ſinks to the extreme of the oppoſite abyſs. But we may form a thouſand conjectures on this ſubject, and yet never hit on the right. Let us therefore endeavour to deſerve her ſmiles, and whether we ſucceed or not, we ſhall feel more innate ſatisfaction, than thouſands of thoſe who baſk in the ſunſhine of her favour unworthily. But to return to Mrs. Crayton, this young man, whom I ſhall diſtinguiſh by the name of Corydon, was the reigning favourite of her heart. He eſcorted her to the play, danced with her at every ball, and when indiſpoſition prevented her going out, it was he alone who was permitted to chear the gloomy ſolitude to which ſhe was obliged to confine herſelf. Did ſhe ever think of poor Charlotte?—if ſhe did, my dear Miſs, it

was only to laugh at the poor girl's want of ſpirit in conſenting to be moped up in the country, while Montraville was enjoying all the pleaſures of a gay, diſſipated city. When ſhe heard of his marriage, ſhe ſmiling ſaid, ſo there's an end of Madam Charlotte's hopes. I wonder who will take her now, or what will become of the little affected prude?

But as you have led to the ſubject, I think we may as well return to the diſtreſſed Charlotte, and not, like the unfeeling Mrs. Crayton, ſhut our hearts to the call of humanity.

CHAPTER XXIX.

WE GO FORWARD AGAIN.

THE ſtrength of Charlotte's conſtitution combated againſt her diſorder, and ſhe began ſlowly to recover, though ſhe ſtill laboured under a violent depreſſion of ſpirits: how muſt that depreſſion be encreaſed, when, upon examining her little ſtore, ſhe found herſelf reduced to one ſolitary guinea, and that during her illneſs the attendance of an apothecary and nurſe, together with many other unavoidable expences, had involved her in debt, from which ſhe ſaw no method of extricating herſelf. As to the faint hope which ſhe had entertained of hearing from and being relieved by her parents; it now entirely forſook her, for it was above

four months ſince her letter was diſpatched, and ſhe had received no anſwer: ſhe therefore imagined that her conduct had either entirely alienated their affection from her, or broken their hearts, and ſhe muſt never more hope to receive their bleſſing.

Never did any human being wiſh for death with greater fervency or with juſter cauſe; yet ſhe had too juſt a ſenſe of the duties of the chriſtian religion to attempt to put a period to her own exiſtence. "I have but to be patient a little longer," ſhe would cry, "and nature, fatigued and fainting, will throw off this heavy load of mortality, and I ſhall be releaſed from all my ſufferings."

It was one cold ſtormy day in the latter end of December, as Charlotte ſat by a handful of fire, the low ſtate of her finances not allowing her to repleniſh her ſtock of fuel, and prudence teaching her to be careful of what ſhe had, when ſhe was ſurpriſed by the entrance of a farmer's wife, who, without much ceremony, ſeated herſelf, and began this curious harangue.

"I'm come to ſee if as how you can pay your rent, becauſe as how we hear Captain Montable is gone away, and it's fifty to one if he b'ant killed afore he comes back again; and then, Miſs, or Ma'am, or whatever you may be, as I was ſaying to my huſband, where are we to look for our money."

This was a ſtroke altogether unexpected by Charlotte: ſhe knew ſo little of the ways of the world that ſhe had never beſtowed a thought on the payment for the rent of the houſe; ſhe knew indeed that ſhe owed a good deal, but this was never reckoned among the others: ſhe was thunderſtruck; ſhe hardly knew what anſwer to make, yet it was abſolutely neceſſary that ſhe ſhould ſay ſomething: and judging of the gentleneſs of every female diſpoſition by her own, ſhe thought the beſt way to intereſt the woman in her favour would be to tell her candidly to what a ſituation ſhe was reduced, and how little probability there was of her ever paying any body.

Alas poor Charlotte, how confined was her knowledge of human nature, or ſhe would have been convinced that the only way to enſure the friendſhip and aſſiſtance of your ſurrounding acquaintance is to convince them you do not require it, for when once the petrifying aſpect of diſtreſs and penury appears, whoſe qualities, like Meduſa's head, can change to ſtone all that look upon it; when once this Gorgon claims acquaintance with us, the phantom of friendſhip, that before courted our notice, will vaniſh into unſubſtantial air, and the whole world before us appear a barren waſte. Pardon me, ye dear ſpirits of benevolence, whoſe benign ſmiles and chearful-giving hand have ſtrewed ſweet flowers on many a

thorny path through which my wayward fate forced me to paſs; think not, that, in condemning the unfeeling texture of the human heart, I forget the ſpring from whence flow all the comforts I enjoy: oh no! I look up to you as to bright conſtellations, gathering new ſplendours from the ſurrounding darkneſs: but ah! whilſt I adore the benignant rays that cheared and illumined my heart, I mourn that their influence cannot extend to all the ſons and daughters of affliction.

"Indeed, Madam," ſaid poor Charlotte in a tremulous accent, "I am at a loſs what to do. Montraville placed me here, and promiſed to defray all my expenſes: but he has forgot his promiſe, he has forſaken me, and I have no friend who has either power or will to relieve me. Let me hope, as you ſee my unhappy ſituation, your charity——"

"Charity," cried the woman impatiently interrupting her, "charity indeed: why, Miſtreſs, charity begins at home, and I have ſeven children at home, *honeſt*, *lawful* children, and it is my duty to keep them; and do you think I will give away my property to a naſty, impudent huſſey, to maintain her and her baſtard; an I was ſaying to my huſband the other day what will this world come to; honeſt women are nothing now-a-days, while the harlotings are ſet up for fine ladies, and

look upon us no more nor the dirt they walk upon; but let me tell you, my fine ſpoken Ma'am, I muſt have my money; ſo ſeeing as how you can't pay it, why you muſt troop, and leave all your fine gim-cracks and fal der ralls behind you. I don't aſk for no more nor my right, and nobody ſhall dare for to go for to hinder me of it."

"Oh heavens," cried Charlotte, claſping her hands, "what will become of me?"

"Come on ye!" retorted the unfeeling wretch: "why go to the barracks and work for a morſel of bread; waſh and mend the ſoldiers cloaths, an cook their victuals, and not expect to live in idleneſs on honeſt people's means. Oh I wiſh I could ſee the day when all ſuch cattle were obliged to work hard and eat little: it's only what they deſerve."

"Father of mercy," cried Charlotte, "I acknowledge thy correction juſt: but prepare me, I beſeech thee, for the portion of miſery thou may'ſt pleaſe to lay upon me."

"Well," ſaid the woman, "I ſhall go an tell my huſband as how you can't pay; and ſo d'ye ſee, Ma'am, get ready to be packing away this very night, for you ſhould not ſtay another night in this houſe, though I was ſure you would lay in the ſtreet."

Charlotte bowed her head in ſilence; but the anguiſh of her heart was too great to permit her to articulate a ſingle word.

CHAPTER XXX.

And what is friendſhip but a name,
A charm that lulls to ſleep,
A ſhade that follows wealth and fame,
But leaves the wretch to weep.

WHEN Charlotte was left to herſelf, ſhe began to think what courſe ſhe muſt take, or to whom ſhe could apply, to prevent her periſhing for want, or perhaps that very night falling a victim to the inclemency of the ſeaſon. After many perplexed thoughts, ſhe at laſt determined to ſet out for New-York, and enquire out Mrs. Crayton, from whom ſhe had no doubt but ſhe ſhould obtain immediate relief as ſoon as her diſtreſs was made known; ſhe had no ſooner formed this reſolution than ſhe reſolved immediately to put it in execution: ſhe therefore wrote the following little billet to Mrs. Crayton, thinking if ſhe ſhould have company with her it would be better to ſend it in than to requeſt to ſee her.

TO MRS. CRAYTON.

"MADAM,

"When we left our native land, that dear happy land which now contains all that is dear to the wretched Charlotte, our proſpects were the ſame; we both, pardon me, Madam, if I ſay, we both too eaſily followed the impulſe of our treache-

rous hearts, and truſted our happineſs on a tempeſtuous ocean, where mine has been wrecked and loſt for ever; you have been more fortunate—you are united to a man of honour and humanity, united by the moſt ſacred ties, reſpected, eſteemed, and admired, and ſurrounded by innumerable bleſſings of which I am bereaved, enjoying thoſe pleaſures which have fled my boſom never to return; alas! ſorrow and deep regret have taken their place. Behold me, Madam, a poor forſaken wanderer, who has not where to lay her weary head, wherewith to ſupply the wants of nature, or to ſhield her from the inclemency of the weather. To you I ſue, to you I look for pity and relief. I aſk not to be received as an intimate or an equal; only for charity's ſweet ſake receive me into your hoſpitable manſion, allot me the meaneſt apartment in it, and let me breath out my ſoul in prayers for your happineſs; I cannot, I feel I cannot long bear up under the accumulated woes that pour in upon me; but oh! my dear Madam, for the love of heaven ſuffer me not to expire in the ſtreet; and when I am at peace, as ſoon I ſhall be, extend your compaſſion to my helpleſs offſpring, ſhould it pleaſe heaven that it ſhould ſurvive its unhappy mother. A gleam of joy breaks in on my benighted ſoul while I reflect that you cannot, will not refuſe your protection to the heart-broken

"CHARLOTTE."

When Charlotte had finiſhed this letter, late as it was in the afternoon, and though the ſnow began to fall very faſt, ſhe tied up a few neceſſaries which ſhe had prepared againſt her expected confinement, and terrified leſt ſhe ſhould be again expoſed to the inſults of her barbarous landlady, more dreadful to her wounded ſpirit than either ſtorm or darkneſs, ſhe ſet forward for New York.

It may be aſked by thoſe, who, in a work of this kind, love to cavil at every trifling omiſſion, whether Charlotte did not poſſeſs any valuable of which ſhe could have diſpoſed, and by that means have ſupported herſelf till Mrs. Beauchamp's return, when ſhe would have been certain of receiving every tender attention which compaſſion and friendſhip could dictate: but let me entreat theſe wiſe, penetrating gentlemen to reflect, that when Charlotte left England, it was in ſuch haſte that there was no time to purchaſe any thing more than what was wanted for immediate uſe on the voyage, and after her arrival at New-York, Montraville's affection ſoon began to decline, ſo that her whole wardrobe conſiſted of only neceſſaries, and as to baubles, with which fond lovers often load their miſtreſſes, ſhe poſſeſſed not one, except a plain gold locket of ſmall value, which contained a lock of her mother's hair, and which the greateſt extremity of want could not have forced her to part with.

I hope, Sir, your prejudices are now removed

in regard to the probability of my ſtory? Oh they are. Well then, with your leave, I will proceed.

The diſtance from the houſe which our ſuffering heroine occupied, to New-York, was not very great, yet the ſnow fell ſo faſt, and the cold ſo intenſe, that, being unable from her ſituation to walk quick, ſhe found herſelf almoſt ſinking with cold and fatigue before ſhe reached the town, her garments, which were merely ſuitable to the ſummer ſeaſon, being an undreſs robe of plain white muſlin, were wet through, and a thin black cloak and bonnet, very improper habiliments for ſuch a climate, but poorly defended her from the cold. In this ſituation ſhe reached the city, and enquired of a foot ſoldier whom ſhe met, the way to Colonel Crayton's.

"Bleſs you, my ſweet lady," ſaid the ſoldier with a voice and look of compaſſion, "I will ſhew you the way with all my heart; but if you are going to make a petition to Madam Crayton it is all to no purpoſe I aſſure you: if you pleaſe I will conduct you to Mr. Franklin's; though Miſs Julia is married and gone now, yet the old gentleman is very good."

"Julia Franklin," ſaid Charlotte; "is ſhe not married to Montraville?"

"Yes," replied the ſoldier, "and may God bleſs them, for a better officer never lived, he is ſo good to us all; and as to Miſs Julia, all the poor folk almoſt worſhipped her."

"Gracious heaven," cried Charlotte, "is Montraville then unjuſt to none but me."

The ſoldier now ſhewed her Colonel Crayton's door, and with a beating heart, ſhe knocked for admiſſion.

Chapter XXXI.

SUBJECT CONTINUED.

WHEN the door was opened, Charlotte, in a voice rendered ſcarcely articulate, through cold and the extreme agitation of her mind, demanded whether Mrs. Crayton was at home. The ſervant heſitated: he knew that his lady was engaged at a game of picquet with her dear Corydon, nor could he think ſhe would like to be diſturbed by a perſon whoſe appearance ſpoke her of ſo little conſequence as Charlotte; yet there was ſomething in her countenance that rather intereſted him in her favour, and he ſaid his lady was engaged, but if ſhe had any particular meſſage he would deliver it.

"Take up this letter," ſaid Charlotte: "tell her the unhappy writer of it waits in her hall for an anſwer."

The tremulous accent, the tearful eye, muſt have moved any heart not compoſed of adamant. The man took the letter from the poor ſuppliant, and haſtily aſcended the ſtair caſe.

"A letter, Madam," ſaid he, preſenting it to his lady: "an immediate anſwer is required."

Mrs. Crayton glanced her eye careleſsly over the contents. "What ſtuff is this;" cried ſhe haughtily; "have not I told you a thouſand times that I will not be plagued with beggars, and petitions from people one knows nothing about? Go tell the woman I can't do any thing in it. I'm ſorry, but one can't relieve every body."

The ſervant bowed, and heavily returned with this chilling meſſage to Charlotte.

"Surely," ſaid ſhe, "Mrs. Crayton has not read my letter. Go, my good friend, pray go back to her; tell her it is Charlotte Temple who requeſt beneath her hoſpitable roof to find ſhelter from the inclemency of the ſeaſon."

"Prithee, don't plague me, man," cried Mrs. Crayton impatiently, as the ſervant advanced ſomething in behalf of the unhappy girl. I tell you I don't know her."

"Not know me," cried Charlotte, ruſhing into the room, (for ſhe had followed the man up ſtairs) "not know me, not remember the ruined Charlotte Temple, who, but for you, perhaps might ſtill have been innocent, ſtill have been happy. Oh! La Rue, this is beyond every thing I could have believed poſſible."

"Upon my honour, Miſs," replied the unfeeling woman with the utmoſt effrontery, "this is a

moſt unaccountable addreſs: it is beyond my comprehenſion. John," continued ſhe, turning to the ſervant, "the young woman is certainly out of her ſenſes: do pray take her away, ſhe terrifies me to death."

"Oh God," cried Charlotte, claſping her hands in an agony, "this is too much; what will become of me? but I will not leave you; they ſhall not tear me from you; here on my knees I conjure you to ſave me from periſhing in the ſtreets: if you really have forgot me, oh for charity's ſweet ſake this night let me be ſheltered from the winter's piercing cold."

The kneeling figure of Charlotte in her affecting ſituation might have moved the heart of a ſtoic to compaſſion: but Mrs, Crayton remained inflexible. In vain did Charlotte recount the time they had known each other at Chicheſter, in vain mention their being in the ſame ſhip, in vain were the names of Montraville and Belcour mentioned. Mrs. Crayton could only ſay ſhe was ſorry for her imprudence, but could not think of having her own reputation endangered by encouraging a woman of that kind in her own houſe, beſides ſhe did not know what trouble and expenſe ſhe might bring upon her huſband by giving ſhelter to a woman in her ſituation.

"I can at leaſt die here," ſaid Charlotte, "I feel I cannot long ſurvive this dreadful conflict.

Father of mercy, here let me finish my existence.'' Her agonizing sensations overpowered her, and she fell senseless on the floor.

"Take her away," said Mrs. Crayton, "she will really frighten me into hysterics; take her away I say this instant."

"And where must I take the poor creature?" said the servant with a voice and look of compassion.

"Any where," cried she hastily, only don't let me ever see her again. I declare she has flurried me so, I shan't be myself again this fortnight."

John, assisted by his fellow-servant, raised and carried her down stairs. "Poor soul," said he, "you shall not lay in the street this night. I have a bed and a poor little hovel, where my wife and her little ones rest them, but they shall watch to night, and you shall be sheltered from danger." They placed her in a chair; and the benevolent man, assisted by one of his comrades, carried her to the place where his wife and children lived. A surgeon was sent for: he bled her, she gave signs of returning life, and before the dawn, gave birth to a female infant. After this event she lay for some hours in a kind of stupor; and if at any time she spoke, it was with a quickness and incoherence that plainly evinced the total deprivation of her reason.

CHAPTER XXXII.

REASONS WHY AND WHEREFORE.

THE reader of ſenſibility may perhaps be aſtoniſhed to find Mrs. Crayton could ſo poſitively deny any knowledge of Charlotte; it is therefore but juſt that her conduct ſhould in ſome meaſure be accounted for. She had ever been fully ſenſible of the ſuperiority of Charlotte's ſenſe and virtue; ſhe was conſcious that ſhe had never ſwerved from rectitude, had it not been for her bad precepts and worſe example. Theſe were things as yet unknown to her huſband, and ſhe wiſhed not to have that part of her conduct expoſed to him, as ſhe had great reaſon to fear ſhe had already loſt conſiderable part of that power ſhe once maintained over him. She trembled whilſt Charlotte was in the houſe, leſt the Colonel ſhould return; ſhe perfectly well remembered how much he ſeemed intereſted in her favour whilſt on their paſſage from England, and made no doubt, but, ſhould he ſee her in her preſent diſtreſs, he would offer her an aſylum, and protect her to the utmoſt of his power. In that caſe ſhe feared the unguarded nature of Charlotte might diſcover to the Colonel the part ſhe had taken in the unhappy girl's elopement, and ſhe well knew the contraſt between her own and Charlotte's conduct would make the

former appear in no very reſpectable light. Had ſhe reflected properly, ſhe would have afforded the poor girl protection; and by enjoining her ſilence, enſured it by acts of repeated kindneſs; but vice in general blinds its votaries, and they diſcover their real characters to the world when they are moſt ſtudious to preſerve appearances.

Juſt ſo it happened with Mrs. Crayton: her ſervants made no ſcruple of mentioning the cruel conduct of their lady to a poor diſtreſſed lunatic who claimed her protection; every one joined in reprobating her inhumanity; nay, even Corydon thought ſhe might at leaſt have ordered her to be taken care of, but he dare not even hint it to her, for he lived but in her ſmiles, and drew from her laviſh fondneſs large ſums to ſupport an extravagance to which the ſtate of his own finances was very inadequate; it cannot therefore be ſuppoſed that he wiſhed Mrs. Crayton to be very liberal in her bounty to the afflicted ſuppliant; yet vice had not ſo entirely ſeared over his heart, but the ſorrows of Charlotte could find a vulnerable part.

Charlotte had now been three days with her humane preſervers, but ſhe was totally inſenſible of every thing: ſhe raved inceſſantly for Montraville and her father: ſhe was not conſcious of being a mother, nor took the leaſt notice of her child, except to aſk whoſe it was, and why it was not carried to its parents.

"Oh," ſaid ſhe one day, ſtarting up on hearing the infant cry, "why, why will you keep that child here; I am ſure you would not if you knew how hard it was for a mother to be parted from her infant: it is like tearing the cords of life aſunder. Oh could you ſee the horrid ſight which I now behold—there—there ſtands my dear mother, her poor boſom bleeding at every vein, her gentle, affectionate heart torn in a thouſand pieces, and all for the loſs of a ruined, ungrateful child. Save me—ſave me—from her frown. I dare not—indeed I dare not ſpeak to her."

Such were the dreadful images that haunted her diſtracted mind, and nature was ſinking faſt under the dreadful malady which medicine had no power to remove. The ſurgeon who attended her was a humane man; he exerted his utmoſt abilities to ſave her, but he ſaw ſhe was in want of many neceſſaries and comforts, which the poverty of her hoſpitable hoſt rendered him unable to provide: he therefore determined to make her ſituation known to ſome of the officers' ladies, and endeavour to make a collection for her relief.

When he returned home, after making this reſolution, he found a meſſage from Mrs. Beauchamp, who had juſt arrived from Rhode-Iſland, requeſting he would call and ſee one of her children, who was very unwell. "I do not know," ſaid he, as he was haſtening to obey the ſummons,

"I do not know a woman to whom I could apply with more hope of ſucceſs than Mrs. Beauchamp. I will endeavour to intereſt her in this poor girl's behalf; ſhe wants the ſoothing balm of friendly conſolation: we may perhaps ſave her; we will try at leaſt."

"And where is ſhe," cried Mrs. Beauchamp, when he had preſcribed ſomething for the child, and told his little pathetic tale, "where is ſhe, Sir? we will go to her immediately. Heaven forbid that I ſhould be deaf to the calls of humanity. Come, we will go this inſtant." Then ſeizing the doctor's arm, they ſought the habitation that contained the dying Charlotte.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

WHICH PEOPLE VOID OF FEELING NEED NOT READ.

WHEN Mrs. Beauchamp entered the apartment of the poor ſufferer, ſhe ſtarted back with horror. On a wretched bed, without hangings, and but poorly ſupplied with covering, lay the emaciated figure of what ſtill retained the ſemblance of a lovely woman, though ſickneſs had ſo altered her features that Mrs. Beauchamp had not the leaſt recollection of her perſon. In one corner of the room ſtood a woman waſhing, and, ſhiver-

ing over a ſmall fire, two healthy but half naked children; the infant was aſleep beſide its mother, and, on a chair by the bed ſide, ſtood a porrenger and wooden ſpoon, containing a little gruel, and a tea-cup with about two ſpoonfulls of wine in it. Mrs. Beauchamp had never before beheld ſuch a ſcene of poverty; ſhe ſhuddered involuntarily, and exclaiming—"heaven preſerve us!" leaned on the back of a chair ready to ſink to the earth. The doctor repented having ſo precipitately brought her into this affecting ſcene; but there was no time for apologies: Charlotte caught the ſound of her voice, and ſtarting almoſt out of bed, exclaimed—"Angel of peace and mercy, art thou come to deliver me? Oh, I know you are, for whenever you was near me I felt eaſed of half my ſorrows; but you don't know me, nor can I, with all the recollection I am miſtreſs of, remember your name juſt now, but I know that benevolent countenance, and the ſoftneſs of that voice which has ſo often comforted the wretched Charlotte."

Mrs. Beauchamp had, during the time Charlotte was ſpeaking, ſeated herſelf on the bed and taken one of her hands; ſhe looked at her attentively, and at the name of Charlotte ſhe perfectly conceived the whole ſhocking affair. A faint ſickneſs came over her. "Gracious heaven," ſaid ſhe, "is this poſſible?" and burſting into tears, ſhe reclined the burning head of Charlotte on her own

boſom; and folding her arms about her, wept over her in ſilence. "Oh," ſaid Charlotte "you are very good to weep thus for me: it is a long time ſince I ſhed a tear for myſelf: my head and heart are both on fire, but theſe tears of your's ſeem to cool and refreſh it. Oh now I remember you ſaid you would ſend a letter to my poor father: do you think he ever received it? or perhaps you have brought me an anſwer: why don't you ſpeak, Madam? Does he ſay I may go home? Well he is very good? I ſhall ſoon be ready."

She then made an effort to get out of bed; but being prevented, her frenzy again returned, and ſhe raved with the greateſt wildneſs and incoherence. Mrs. Beauchamp, finding it was impoſſible for her to be removed, contented herſelf with ordering the apartment to be made more comfortable, and procuring a proper nurſe for both mother and child? and having learnt the particulars of Charlotte's fruitleſs application to Mrs. Crayton from honeſt John, ſhe amply rewarded him for his benevolence, and returned home with a heart oppreſſed with many painful ſenſations, but yet rendered eaſy by the reflexion that ſhe had performed her duty towards a diſtreſſed fellow-creature.

Early the next morning ſhe again viſited Charlotte, and found her tolerably compoſed; ſhe called her by name, thanked her for her goodneſs, and when her child was brought to her, preſſed it

in her arms, wept over it, and called it the offſpring of diſobedience. Mrs. Beauchamp was delighted to ſee her ſo much amended, and began to hope ſhe might recover, and, ſpite of her former errors, become an uſeful and reſpectable member of ſociety; but the arrival of the doctor put an end to theſe deluſive hopes: he ſaid nature was making her laſt effort, and a few hours would moſt probably conſign the unhappy girl to her kindred duſt.

Being aſked how ſhe found herſelf, ſhe replied —"Why better, much better, doctor. I hope now I have but little more to ſuffer. I had laſt night a few hours ſleep, and when I awoke recovered the full power of recollection. I am quite ſenſible of my weakneſs; I feel I have but little longer to combat with the ſhafts of affliction. I have an humble confidence in the mercy of him who died to ſave the world, and truſt that my ſufferings in this ſtate of mortality, joined to my unfeigned repentance, through his mercy, have blotted my offences from the ſight of my offended maker. I have but one care—my poor infant! Father of mercy," continued ſhe, raiſing her eyes, "of thy infinite goodneſs, grant that the ſins of the parent be not viſited on the unoffending child. May thoſe who taught me to deſpiſe thy laws be forgiven; lay not my offences to their charge, I beſeech thee; and oh! ſhower the choiceſt of thy

bleſſings on thoſe whoſe pity has ſoothed the afflicted heart, and made eaſy even the bed of pain and ſickneſs."

She was exhauſted by this fervent addreſs to the throne of mercy, and though her lips ſtill moved her voice became inarticulate: ſhe lay for ſome time as it were in a doſe, and then recovering, faintly preſſed Mrs. Beauchamp's hand, and requeſted that a clergyman might be ſent for.

On his arrival ſhe joined fervently in the pious office, frequently mentioning her ingratitude to her parents as what lay moſt heavy at her heart. When ſhe had performed the laſt ſolemn duty, and was preparing to lie down, a little buſtle on the outſide door occaſioned Mrs. Beauchamp to open it, and enquire the cauſe. A man in appearance about forty, preſented himſelf, and aſked for Mrs. Beauchamp.

"That is my name, Sir," ſaid ſhe.

"Oh then, my dear Madam," cried he, tell "me where I may find my poor, ruined, but repentant child."

Mrs. Beauchamp was ſurpriſed and affected; ſhe knew not what to ſay; ſhe foreſaw the agony this interview would occaſion Mr. Temple, who had juſt arrived in ſearch of his Charlotte, and yet was ſenſible that the pardon and bleſſing of her father would ſoften even the agonies of death to the daughter.

She hesitated. "Tell me, Madam," cried he wildly, "tell me, I beseech thee, does she live? shall I see my darling once again? Perhaps she is in this house. Lead, lead me to her, that I may bless her, and then lie down and die."

The ardent manner in which he uttered these words occasioned him to raise his voice. It caught the ear of Charlotte: she knew the beloved sound: and uttering a loud shriek, she sprang forward as Mr. Temple entered the room. "My adored father." "My long lost child." Nature could support no more, and they both sunk lifeless into the arms of the attendants.

Charlotte was again put into bed, and a few moments restored Mr. Temple: but to describe the agony of his sufferings is past the power of any one, who, though they may readily conceive, cannot delineate the dreadful scene. Every eye gave testimony of what each heart felt—but all were silent.

When Charlotte recovered, she found herself supported in her father's arms. She cast on him a most expressive look, but was unable to speak. A reviving cordial was administered. She then asked, in a low voice, for her child: it was brought to her: she put it in her father's arms. "Protect her," said she, "and bless your dying——"

Unable to finish the sentence, she sunk back on her pillow: her countenance was serenely composed;

ſhe regarded her father as he preſſed the infant to his breaſt with a ſteadfaſt look; a ſudden beam of joy paſſed acroſs her languid features, ſhe raiſed her eyes to heaven—and then cloſed them for ever.

Chapter XXXIV.

RETRIBUTION.

In the mean time Montraville having received orders to return to New-York, arrived, and having ſtill ſome remains of compaſſionate tenderneſs for the woman whom he regarded as brought to ſhame by himſelf, he went out in ſearch of Belcour, to enquire whether ſhe was ſafe, and whether the child lived. He found him immerſed in diſſipation, and could gain no other intelligence than that Charlotte had left him, and that he knew not what was become of her.

"I cannot believe it poſſible" ſaid Montraville, "that a mind once ſo pure as Charlotte Temple's, ſhould ſo ſuddenly become the manſion of vice. Beware, Belcour," continued he, "beware if you have dared to behave either unjuſt or diſhonourably to that poor girl, your life ſhall pay the forfeit:——I will revenge her cauſe."

He immediately went into the country, to the houſe where he had left Charlotte. It was deſolate. After much enquiry he at length found the ſervant girl who had lived with her. From her he

learnt the miſery Charlotte had endured from the complicated evils of illneſs, poverty and a broken heart, and that ſhe had ſet out on foot for New-York, on a cold winter's evening; but ſhe could inform him no further.

Tortured almoſt to madneſs by this ſhocking account, he returned to the city but, before he reached it, the evening was drawing to a cloſe. In entering the town he was obliged to paſs ſeveral little huts, the reſidence of poor women who ſupported themſelves by waſhing the cloaths of the officers and ſoldiers. It was nearly dark: he heard from a neighbouring ſteeple a ſolemn toll that ſeemed to ſay ſome poor mortal was going to their laſt manſion; the ſound ſtruck on the heart of Montraville, and he involuntarily ſtopped, when, from one of the houſes he ſaw the appearance of a funeral. Almoſt unknowing what he did, he followed at a ſmall diſtance; and as they let the coffin into the grave, he enquired of a ſoldier who ſtood by, and had juſt bruſhed off a tear that did honour to his heart, who it was that was juſt buried. "An pleaſe your honour," ſaid the man, "'tis a poor girl that was brought from her friends by a cruel man, who left her when ſhe was big with child and married another." Montraville ſtood motionleſs, and the man proceeded—"I met her myſelf not a fortnight ſince one night ll wet and cold in the ſtreet; ſhe went to Madam

Crayton's, but she would not take her in, and so the poor thing went raving mad." Montraville could bear no more; he struck his hands against his forehead with violence; and exclaiming "poor murdered Charlotte!" ran with precipitation towards the place where they were heaping the earth on her remains. "Hold, hold, one moment," said he. "Close not the grave of the injured Charlotte Temple till I have taken vengeance on her murderer."

"Rash young man," said Mr. Temple," who "art thou that thus disturbest the last mournful rites of the dead, and rudely breakest in upon the grief of an afflicted father."

"If thou art the father of Charlotte Temple," said he, gazing at him with mingled horror and amazement—"if thou art her father——I am Montraville." Then falling on his knees, he continued—"Here is my bosom. I bare it to receive the stroke I merit. Strike—strike now, and save me from the misery of reflection."

"Alas!" said Mr. Temple," if thou wert the seducer of my child, thy own reflections be thy punishment. I wrest not the power from the hand of omnipotence. Look on that little heap of earth, there hast thou buried the only joy of a fond father. Look at it often; and may thy heart feel such true sorrow as shall merit the mercy of heaven." He turned from him; and Montraville starting up from

the ground, where he had thrown himſelf, and at that inſtant remembering the perfidy of Belcour, flew like lightning to his lodgings. Belcour was intoxicated; Montraville impetuous: they fought, and the ſword of the latter entered the heart of his adverſary. He fell, and expired almoſt inſtantly. Montraville had received a ſlight wound; and overcome with the agitation of his mind and loſs of blood, was carried in a ſtate of inſenſibility to his diſtracted wife. A dangerous illneſs and obſtinate delirium enſued, during which he raved inceſſantly for Charlotte: but a ſtrong conſtitution, and the tender aſſiduities of Julia, in time overcome the diſorder. He recovered but to the end of his life was ſubject to ſevere fits of melancholy, and while he remained at New-York frequently retired to the church-yard, where he would weep over the grave, and regret the untimely fate of the lovely Charlotte Temple.

CHAPTER XXXV.

CONCLUSION.

SHORTLY after the interment of his daughter, Mr. Temple, with his dear little charge and her nurſe, ſet forward for England. It would be impoſſible to do juſtice to the meeting ſcene between him, his Lucy, and her aged father. Every heart

of ſenſibility can eaſily conceive their feelings. After the firſt tumult of grief was ſubſided, Mrs. Temple gave up the chief of her time to her grandchild, and as ſhe grew up and improved, began to almoſt fancy ſhe again poſſeſſed her Charlotte.

It was about ten years after theſe painful events, that Mr. and Mrs. Temple, having buried their father, were obliged to come to London on particular buſineſs, and brought the little Lucy with them. They had been walking one evening, when on their return they found a poor wretch ſitting on the ſteps of the door. She attempted to riſe as they approached, but from extreme weakneſs was unable, and after ſeveral fruitleſs efforts fell back in a fit. Mr. Temple was not one of thoſe men who ſtand to conſider whether by aſſiſting an object in diſtreſs they ſhall not inconvenience themſelves, but inſtigated by the impulſe of a noble feeling heart, immediately ordered her to be carried into the houſe, and proper reſtoratives applied.

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She ſoon recovered; and fixing her eyes on Mrs. Temple, cried—" You know not, Madam, what you do; you know not whom you are relieving, or you would curſe me in the bitterneſs of your heart. Come not near me, Madam, I ſhall contaminate you. I am the viper that ſtung your peace. I am the woman who turned the poor Charlotte out to periſh in the ſtreet. Heaven have mercy! I ſee her now," continued ſhe

looking at Lucy; "ſuch, ſuch was the fair bud of innocence that my vile arts blaſted ere it was half blown."

It was in vain that Mr. and Mrs. Temple intreated her to be compoſed and to take ſome refreſhment. She only drank half a glaſs of wine; and then told them that ſhe had been ſeparated from her huſband ſeven years, the chief of which ſhe had paſſed in riot, diſſipation, and vice, till, overtaken by poverty and ſickneſs, ſhe had been reduced to part with every valuable, and thought only of ending her life in a priſon; when a benevolent friend paid her debts and releaſed her; but that her illneſs encreaſing, ſhe had no poſſible means of ſupporting herſelf, and her friends were weary of relieving her. "I have faſted," ſaid ſhe, "two days, and laſt night lay my aching head on the cold pavement: indeed it was but juſt that I ſhould experience thoſe miſeries myſelf which I had unfeelingly inflicted on others."

Greatly as Mr. Temple had reaſon to deteſt Mrs. Crayton, he could not behold her in this diſtreſs without ſome emotions of pity. He gave her ſhelter that night beneath his hoſpitable roof, and the next day got her admiſſion into an hoſpital; where having lingered a few weeks, ſhe died, a ſtriking example that vice, however proſperous in the beginning, in the end leads only to miſery and ſhame.

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